



**WHEREAS**, National Women's Business Month recognizes and celebrates the vital contributions of women-owned businesses throughout the U.S.; and,

**WHEREAS**, over 42 percent, or more than 456,000, of Illinois' businesses are owned by women - women were already resilient before the COVID-19 pandemic, and they continued to start businesses during and after the pandemic and frequently pivoted their business models to stay in business; and,

**WHEREAS**, more than 445,300 Illinoisans are employed by women-owned businesses, accounting for nearly \$18.5 billion in annual payroll - women-owned businesses have contributed to the state's economy through leadership and investment in their communities; and,

**WHEREAS**, Illinois has demonstrated its commitment to building a business community that is equitable and business friendly - the state supports women-owned businesses and aspiring women business owners and entrepreneurs in every corner of the state through statewide programs and multisector collaborations across Illinois to continue strengthening Illinois' entrepreneur support organizations; and,

**WHEREAS**, over 5,600 women throughout Illinois received assistance from Illinois' Small Business Development Centers and over \$64 million in government contracts were awarded to women-owned businesses through the assistance of the Illinois APEX Accelerator in 2022; and,

**WHEREAS**, the state's services are among Illinois' many programs and services dedicated to supporting women-owned businesses from diverse backgrounds throughout the state; and,

**WHEREAS**, with women being disproportionately underinvested and lacking financial capital opportunities, Illinois provided more than \$168 million since 2020 through Business Interruption and Back to Business Grants to women-owned businesses throughout Illinois as part of the state's ongoing efforts to support women business owners and entrepreneurs hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

**WHEREAS**, the state acknowledges the extraordinary statewide impact of women-owned businesses throughout the year and their perseverance throughout challenging times as they lead as economic drivers and key pillars of our communities;

**THEREFORE**, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim October 2023 as **Women's Business Month** in Illinois and encourage Illinoisans to support women-owned businesses year-round so they can thrive, grow, provide economic security, create jobs, and contribute to making Illinois the best place for current and future women business owners and entrepreneurs.

*In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*



*Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,*  
*this* FIRST *day of* OCTOBER, *in*  
*the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and*  
TWENTY-THREE, *and of the State of Illinois,*  
*two hundred and* FIFTH.

*Alexi Giannouli*  
SECRETARY OF STATE

*JB Pritzker*  
GOVERNOR